DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 622 CS 217 748

AUTHOR Rozema, Robert
TITLE "Heart of Darkness" Webquest: Using Technology To Teach Literary Criticism.
PUB DATE 2001-11-00
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (91st, Baltimore, MD, November 15-20, 2001).
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://www.msu.edu/user/rozemaro/quest/home.htm.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Activity Units; *English Instruction; Feminist Criticism; High Schools; *Inquiry; Instructional Effectiveness; *Internet; Learning Activities; *Literary Criticism; Student Research
IDENTIFIERS *Heart of Darkness; *WebQuest

ABSTRACT

This paper shows how literary criticism can enrich the high school English classroom. Specifically, the paper focuses on how an Internet teaching tool called the WebQuest helped one educator's students learn about literary criticism and apply it to "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad. The WebQuest homepage defines a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web." With its emphasis on individual inquiry and analysis, WebQuest seemed a good tool to teach literary criticism. The WebQuest materials in the paper include an introduction, a task, the process, and a resources list. The "Journey to Meaning" section provides research assignments (with instructions) for the students. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 458 622

"Heart of Darkness" Webquest: Using Technology to Teach Literary Criticism.

by Robert Rozema

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Rozema

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS 217 748

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Robert Rozema
Grand Rapids Christian High School
Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.msu.edu/user/rozemaro/quest/home.htm

NCTE
Baltimore, MD
Fall 2001

Using Technology to Teach Literary Criticism

The idea of teaching literary criticism to high school students may be disagreeable to many of us. We may recall our own struggles with theory as undergraduate or graduate students. Or we may believe that concepts like deconstruction are too abstract or complex for high school students. We might even fear that teaching this level of literary analysis will "murder to dissect," as Wordsworth warns in "The Tables Turned":

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous form of things:
We murder to dissect.

Despite this warning, my colleagues and I hope to show that literary criticism can enrich the high school English classroom. Lisa Schade believes that literary criticism gives students interpretive scaffolding, a framework on which to build and justify their own interpretations. She is currently writing a book about her own experiences teaching literary theory to high school students in Kalamazoo. Allen Carey-Webb also finds a place for theory in the secondary classroom. "Literary scholarship and theory," he argues in his book *Literature and Lives*, "can make the connections between literature and our students' lives stronger, better, and, as the kids now say, 'fresher' than ever." I share this belief with my colleagues and would like to show one way that I have brought literary criticism into my own classroom. More specifically, I would like to illustrate how an Internet teaching tool called the WebQuest helped my students learn about literary criticism and apply it to *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

The WebQuest homepage at http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html defines a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. WebQuests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation." Bernie Dodge and Tom March developed the WebQuest idea in early 1995 at San Diego State University. I was first introduced to the WebQuest in an education class at Western Michigan University. With its emphasis on individual inquiry and analysis, it seemed a good tool to teach literary criticism. I hope this presentation explains why.

Heart of Darkness webquest

Intro
Task
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion

To the docks

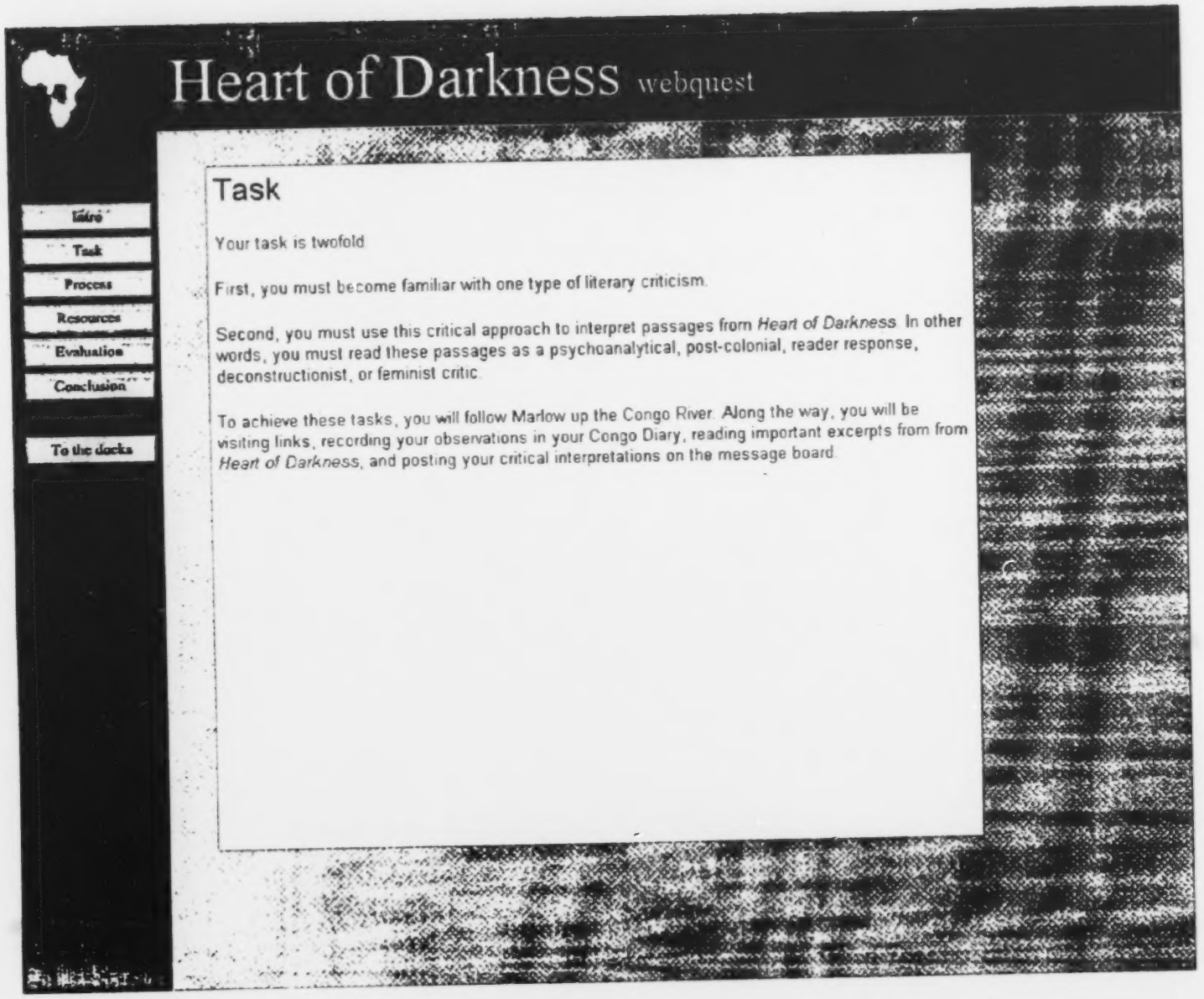
Introduction

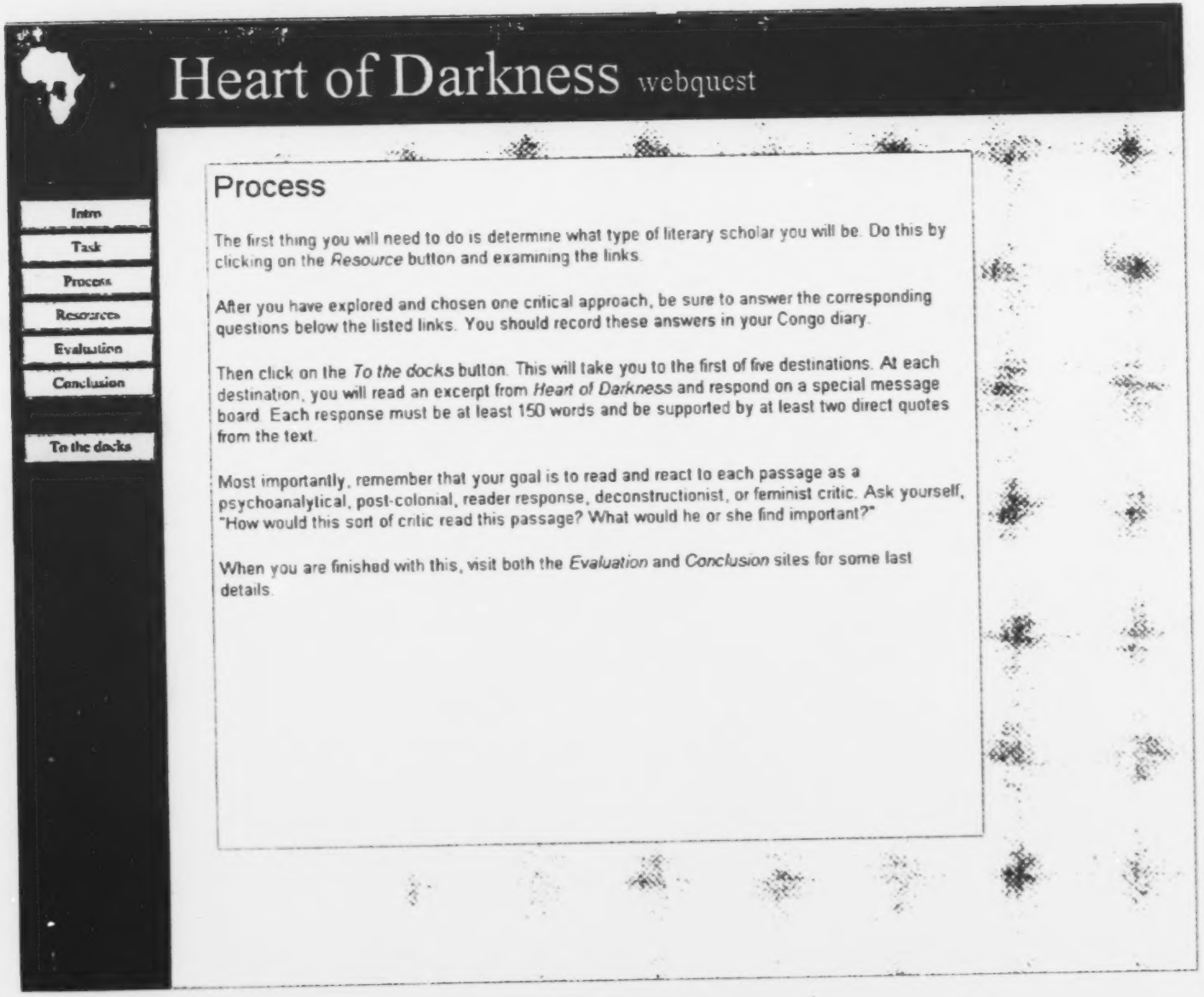
Since its publication in 1899, *Heart of Darkness* has been one of the most widely read books written in English. It has also been one of the most analyzed: scores of literary critics, ranging from feminists to Marxists to New Critics, have all tried to construct their own meanings from the pages of the book.

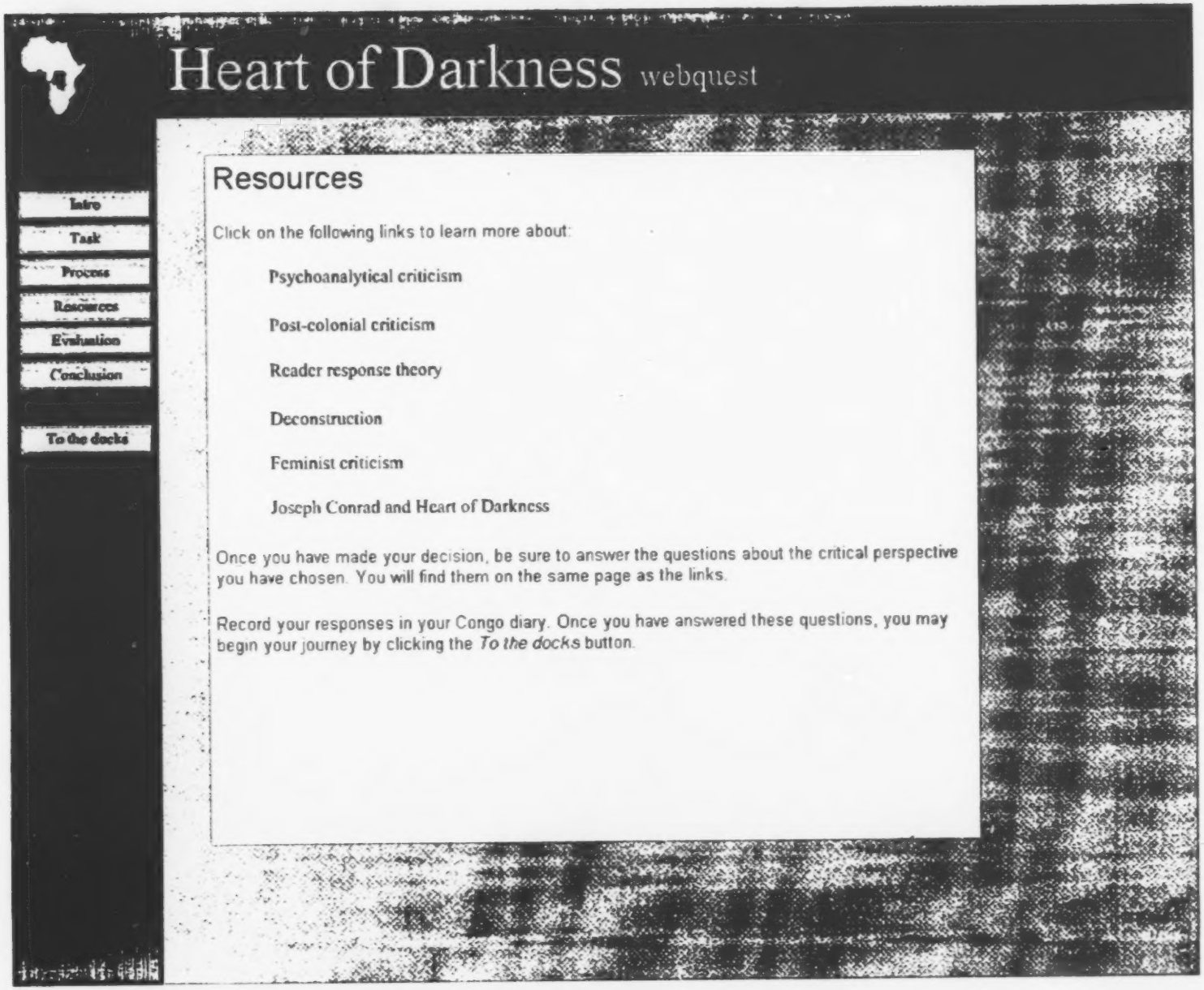
The novel does seem to invite a wide variety of interpretations. Its narrator even claims the meaning of the story "was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine."

After reading *Heart of Darkness*, you may feel that the meaning of the story is very hazy. How do you go about making sense of a story as obscure as *Heart of Darkness*?

This web quest may be of some help. It will help you learn just how some critics have come up with their interpretations of *Heart of Darkness* and encourage you to develop your own critical stance on the book. On your journey toward meaning, you will follow Marlow up the Congo River, shedding light on the heart of darkness as you proceed, and arriving at a better understanding of this evasive book.


Heart of Darkness webquest
Intro
Task
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion
To the docks
Task
Your task is twofold
First, you must become familiar with one type of literary criticism.
Second, you must use this critical approach to interpret passages from Heart of Darkness. In other words, you must read these passages as a psychoanalytical, post-colonial, reader response, deconstructionist, or feminist critic.
To achieve these tasks, you will follow Marlow up the Congo River. Along the way, you will be visiting links, recording your observations in your Congo Diary, reading important excerpts from from Heart of Darkness, and posting your critical interpretations on the message board.


Heart of Darkness webquest
Intro
Task
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion
To the docks
Process
The first thing you will need to do is determine what type of literary scholar you will be. Do this by clicking on the Resource button and examining the links.
After you have explored and chosen one critical approach, be sure to answer the corresponding questions below the listed links. You should record these answers in your Congo diary.
Then click on the To the docks button. This will take you to the first of five destinations. At each destination, you will read an excerpt from Heart of Darkness and respond on a special message board. Each response must be at least 150 words and be supported by at least two direct quotes from the text.
Most importantly, remember that your goal is to read and react to each passage as a psychoanalytical, post-colonial, reader response, deconstructionist, or feminist critic. Ask yourself, "How would this sort of critic read this passage? What would he or she find important?"
When you are finished with this, visit both the Evaluation and Conclusion sites for some last details.


Heart of Darkness webquest
Intro
Task
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion
To the docks
Resources
Click on the following links to learn more about:
Psychoanalytical criticism
Post-colonial criticism
Reader response theory
Deconstruction
Feminist criticism
Joseph Conrad and Heart of Darkness
Once you have made your decision, be sure to answer the questions about the critical perspective you have chosen. You will find them on the same page as the links.
Record your responses in your Congo diary. Once you have answered these questions, you may begin your journey by clicking the To the docks button.

Heart of Darkness webquest

Intro
Task
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion

To the docks

Post-colonial criticism

Explore the links below to learn more about post-colonial criticism:

Emory University Introduction to Post-colonial Criticism

History of the Congo

Post-colonial Literature and Africa

Reforming the Heart of Darkness: The Reform Movement in the Congo

Brown University Post-Colonial Literature

Heart of Darkness, an African Perspective

Brock University: Some Issues in Post-colonial Theory

Example Essay: "An Image of Africa:
Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness"
by Chinua Achebe

Questions to answer in your Congo Diary

1. What is colonialism? Name three colonial powers and list some of their colonies.

2. What was the scramble for Africa? What European countries were involved? What African countries became colonized?

3. What country colonized the Congo? Why was this country interested in the Congo?

4. Describe three ways life for the native Congolese changed under this occupation.

5. What is a post-colonial critic and how might he or she understand or read a text?

Congo Diary

In the space below, answer the questions about your type of literary criticism. Be sure to answer each question completely, using information from the links on the resource page.

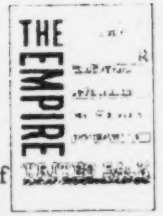
12

13

Heart of Darkness webquest

In'm
Tas
Process
Resources
Evaluation
Conclusion
To the desks

Introduction to Postcolonial Studies



The field of Postcolonial Studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. Some would date its rise in the Western academy from the publication of Edward Said's influential critique of Western constructions of the Orient in his 1978 book, Orientalism. The growing currency within the academy of the term "postcolonial" (sometimes hyphenated) was consolidated by the appearance in 1989 of The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. Since then, the use of cognate terms "Commonwealth" and "Third World" that were used to describe the literature of Europe's former colonies has become rarer. Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and the definition of the term "postcolonial," in a very general sense, it is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. The European empire is said to have held sway over more than 85% of the rest of the globe by the time of the First World War, having consolidated its control over several centuries. The sheer extent and duration of the European empire and its disintegration after the Second World War have led to widespread interest in postcolonial literature and criticism in our own times.

The list of former colonies of European powers is a long one. They are divided into settler (eg. Australia, Canada) and non-settler countries (India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka). Countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe which were partially settled by colonial populations complicate even this simpledivision between settler and non-settler. The widely divergent experiences of these countries suggest that "postcolonial is a very loose term. In strictly definitional terms, for instance, the United States might also be described as a postcolonial country, but it is not perceived as such because of its position of power in world politics in the present, its displacement of native American populations, and its annexation of other parts of the world in what may be seen as a form of colonization. For that matter, other settler countries such as Canada and Australia are sometimes omitted from the category "postcolonial" because of their relatively shorter struggle for independence, their loyalist tendencies toward the mother country which colonized them, and the absence of problems of racism or of the imposition of a foreign language. It could, however, be argued that the relationship between these countries to the mother country is often one of margin to center, making their experience relevant to a better understanding of colonialism.

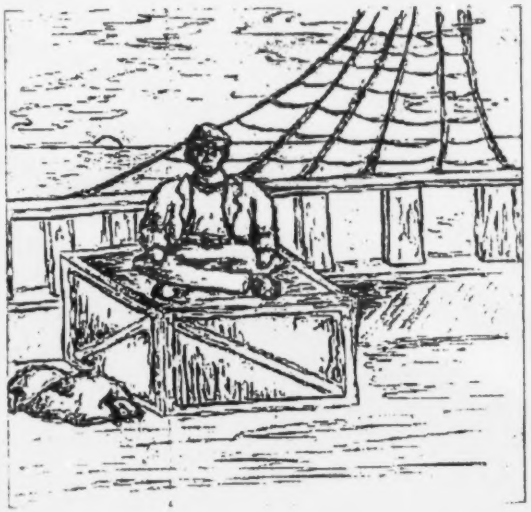
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Journey to Meaning

The docks
Outer Station
Central Station
Inner Station
The Sepulchral City
Message Board

Home

Welcome to the docks



Your Instructions:

Read the following excerpt from *Heart of Darkness* very carefully. You may even wish to print this excerpt so you can underline important words and sentences. If you are uncomfortable reading from a screen, locate the passage in your text (pages 3-4).

Keep in mind that you are reading the passage through the eyes of the literary critic that you researched. Ask yourself, "What would this sort of critic look for? Why?"

When you are done with this excerpt, click *Message Board* to post your thoughts. Be sure to follow the guidelines for posting a message. By the end of this journey, you should have five separate posts, one for each location.

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth."

He was the only man of us who still "followed the sea." The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class. He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them -the ship; and so is their country -the sea. One ship is very much like another, and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Journey to Meaning

The docks
Outer Station
Central Station
Inner Station
The Sepulchral City
Message Board

Home

Welcome to the Outer Station

Your Instructions:

Read the following excerpt from *Heart of Darkness* very carefully. You may even wish to print this excerpt so you can underline important words and sentences. If you are uncomfortable reading from a screen, locate the passage in your text (pages 13-14).

Keep in mind that you are reading the passage through the eyes of the literary critic that you researched. Ask yourself, "What would this sort of critic look for? Why?"

When you are done with this excerpt, click *Message Board* to post your thoughts. Be sure to follow the guidelines for posting a message. By the end of this journey, you should have five separate posts, one for each location.

"Finally I descended the hill, obliquely, towards the trees I had seen.

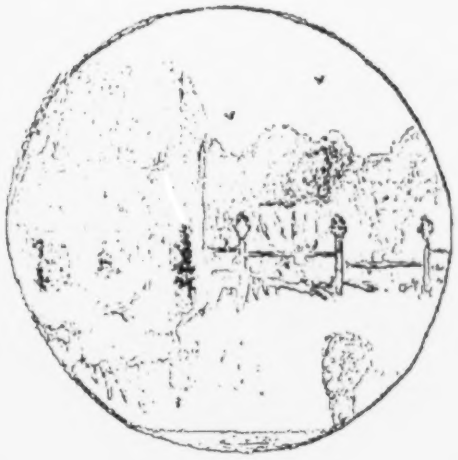
"I avoided a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole. It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do. I don't know. Then I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was not broken. It was a wanton smash-up. At last I got under the trees. My purpose was to stroll into the shade for a moment; but no sooner within than it seemed to me I had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno. The rapids were near, and an uninterrupted, uniform, headlong, rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove, where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved, with a mysterious sound -as though the tearing pace of the launched earth had suddenly become audible

Journey to Meaning

The docks
Outer Station
Central Station
Inner Station
The Sepulchral City
Message Board

Home

Welcome to the Inner Station



Your Instructions:

Read the following excerpt from *Heart of Darkness* very carefully. You may even wish to print this excerpt so you can underline important words and sentences. If you are uncomfortable reading from a screen, locate the passage in your text (pages 44-45).

Keep in mind that you are reading the passage through the eyes of the literary critic that you researched. Ask yourself, "What would this sort of critic look for? Why?"

When you are done with this excerpt, click *Message Board* to post your thoughts. Be sure to follow the guidelines for posting a message. By the end of this journey, you should have five separate posts, one for each location.

"I laid the ghost of his gifts at last with a lie," he began, suddenly.

"Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it -completely. They -the women I mean -are out of it -should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it. You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr. Kurtz saying, 'My Intended.' You would have perceived directly then how completely she was out of it. And the lofty frontal bone of Mr. Kurtz! They say the hair goes on growing sometimes, but this -ah - specimen, was impressively bald. The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball -an ivory ball, it had caressed him, and -lo! -he had withered; it had taken him, loved him,

Journey to Meaning

The docks
Outer Station
Central Station
Inner Station
The Sepulchral City
Message Board

Home

- Re(3): Inner Station - By **Jackie Snow** *November 2, 2001 at 09:05:35 PM*
  - Re(4): Inner Station - By **Dave Kroondyk** *November 3, 2001 at 06:14:44 PM*
    - Re(5): Inner Station - By **Emily Schreur** *November 3, 2001 at 06:52:37 PM*
      - Re(6): Inner Station - By **James Cherry** *November 4, 2001 at 01:49:05 AM*
      - Re(6): Inner Station - By **David Schroeder** *November 3, 2001 at 11:41:43 PM*

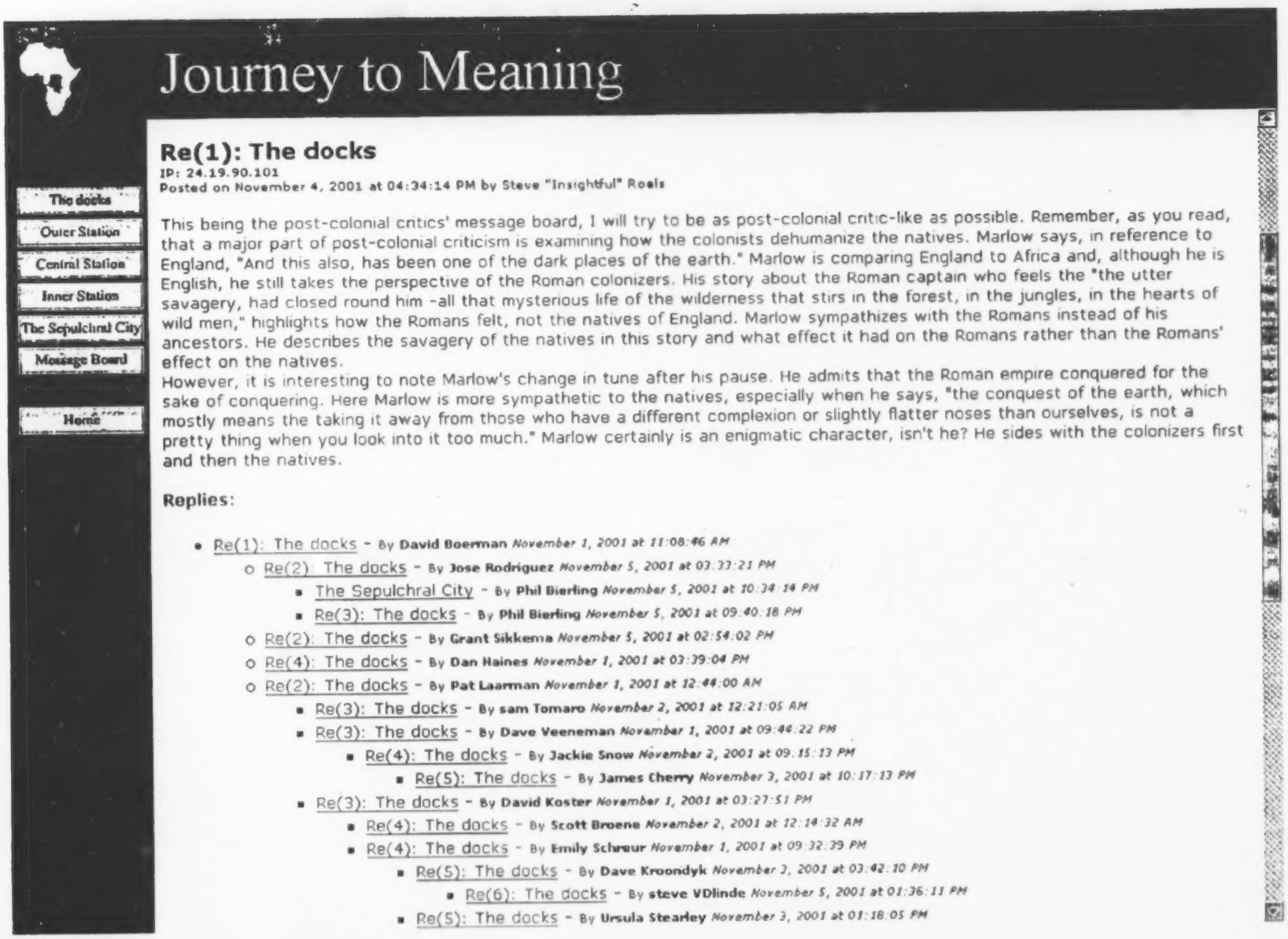
- The docks - By **Rozema** *October 4, 2001 at 04:57:16 PM*
  - Re(1): The docks - By **Steve "Insightful" Roels** *November 4, 2001 at 04:34:14 PM*
  - Re(1): The docks - By **David Boerman** *November 1, 2001 at 11:08:46 AM*
    - Re(2): The docks - By **Jose Rodriguez** *November 5, 2001 at 03:33:21 PM*
      - The Sepulchral City - By **Phil Bierling** *November 5, 2001 at 10:34:14 PM*
      - Re(3): The docks - By **Phil Bierling** *November 5, 2001 at 09:40:18 PM*
    - Re(2): The docks - By **Grant Sikkema** *November 5, 2001 at 02:58:02 PM*
    - Re(4): The docks - By **Dan Haines** *November 1, 2001 at 03:39:04 PM*
    - Re(2): The docks - By **Pat Laarman** *November 1, 2001 at 12:44:00 AM*
      - Re(3): The docks - By **sam Tomaro** *November 2, 2001 at 12:21:05 AM*
      - Re(3): The docks - By **Dave Veeneman** *November 1, 2001 at 09:44:22 PM*
        - Re(4): The docks - By **Jackie Snow** *November 2, 2001 at 09:15:13 PM*
          - Re(5): The docks - By **James Cherry** *November 3, 2001 at 10:11:13 PM*
      - Re(3): The docks - By **David Koster** *November 1, 2001 at 03:27:51 PM*
        - Re(4): The docks - By **Scott Broene** *November 2, 2001 at 12:14:32 AM*
        - Re(4): The docks - By **Emily Schreur** *November 1, 2001 at 09:32:39 PM*
          - Re(5): The docks - By **Dave Kroondyk** *November 3, 2001 at 03:42:10 PM*
            - Re(6): The docks - By **steve VDlinde** *November 5, 2001 at 01:36:11 PM*
          - Re(5): The docks - By **Ursula Stearley** *November 3, 2001 at 01:18:05 PM*
            - Re(6): The docks - By **David Schroeder** *November 3, 2001 at 09:19:53 PM*

- Outer Station - By **Rozema** *October 4, 2001 at 04:56:37 PM*
  - Re(1): Outer Station - By **Ursula Stearley** *November 5, 2001 at 01:31:18 PM*
  - Re(1): Outer Station - By **Steve "Deep in thought" Roels** *November 4, 2001 at 05:03:22 PM*
  - Re(1): Outer Station - By **David Schroeder** *November 3, 2001 at 10:02:23 PM*
    - Re(2): Outer Station - By **Grant Sikkema** *November 5, 2001 at 03:09:38 PM*
  - Re(1): Outer Station - By **Dave Veeneman** *November 1, 2001 at 10:10:07 PM*
    - Re(2): Outer Station - By **sam Tomaro** *November 2, 2001 at 12:05:08 AM*
      - Re(3): Outer Station - By **steve VDlinde** *November 4, 2001 at 02:59:20 PM*
  - Re(1): Outer Station - By **David Boerman** *November 1, 2001 at 11:25:06 AM*
    - Re(2): Outer Station - By **Jose Rodriguez** *November 5, 2001 at 03:57:11 PM*

Free message boards available at:

www.boards2go.com

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Journey to Meaning

The docks
Outer Station
Central Station
Inner Station
The Sepulchral City
Message Board
Home

Re(1): The docks

IP: 24.19.90.101
Posted on November 4, 2001 at 04:34:14 PM by Steve "Insightful" Roels

This being the post-colonial critics' message board, I will try to be as post-colonial critic-like as possible. Remember, as you read, that a major part of post-colonial criticism is examining how the colonists dehumanize the natives. Marlow says, in reference to England, "And this also, has been one of the dark places of the earth." Marlow is comparing England to Africa and, although he is English, he still takes the perspective of the Roman colonizers. His story about the Roman captain who feels the "the utter savagery, had closed round him -all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men," highlights how the Romans felt, not the natives of England. Marlow sympathizes with the Romans instead of his ancestors. He describes the savagery of the natives in this story and what effect it had on the Romans rather than the Romans' effect on the natives.
However, it is interesting to note Marlow's change in tune after his pause. He admits that the Roman empire conquered for the sake of conquering. Here Marlow is more sympathetic to the natives, especially when he says, "the conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much." Marlow certainly is an enigmatic character, isn't he? He sides with the colonizers first and then the natives.

Replies:

- Re(1): The docks - By **David Boerman** *November 1, 2001 at 11:08:46 AM*
  - Re(2): The docks - By **Jose Rodriguez** *November 5, 2001 at 03:33:21 PM*
    - The Sepulchral City - By **Phil Bierling** *November 5, 2001 at 10:34:14 PM*
    - Re(3): The docks - By **Phil Bierling** *November 5, 2001 at 09:40:18 PM*
  - Re(2): The docks - By **Grant Sikkema** *November 5, 2001 at 02:54:02 PM*
  - Re(4): The docks - By **Dan Haines** *November 1, 2001 at 03:39:04 PM*
  - Re(2): The docks - By **Pat Laarman** *November 1, 2001 at 12:44:00 AM*
    - Re(3): The docks - By **sam Tomaro** *November 2, 2001 at 12:21:05 AM*
    - Re(3): The docks - By **Dave Veeneman** *November 1, 2001 at 09:44:22 PM*
      - Re(4): The docks - By **Jackie Snow** *November 2, 2001 at 09:15:13 PM*
        - Re(5): The docks - By **James Cherry** *November 3, 2001 at 10:17:13 PM*
    - Re(3): The docks - By **David Koster** *November 1, 2001 at 03:27:51 PM*
      - Re(4): The docks - By **Scott Broene** *November 2, 2001 at 12:14:32 AM*
      - Re(4): The docks - By **Emily Schreur** *November 1, 2001 at 09:32:39 PM*
        - Re(5): The docks - By **Dave Kroondyk** *November 3, 2001 at 03:42:10 PM*
          - Re(6): The docks - By **steve VDlinde** *November 5, 2001 at 01:36:11 PM*
        - Re(5): The docks - By **Ursula Stearley** *November 3, 2001 at 01:18:05 PM*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Critical Dialogue: *Heart of Darkness* from Feminist Perspectives

History portrayed through the eyes of a man--how interesting. The "handy men," the "Sea Men," the "fellows," the "Chaps," the "civilized man." Never is the mother or the wife or sister or the family ever mentioned. They were "Man enough to face the darkness" but are they woman enough to realize what they were really doing? I believe that Conrad is giving us the history of colonization purely through the eyes of a man. He tells about things that men did, that men thought and uses masculine descriptions for example, "the utter savagery, had closed round him...like in the hearts of wild men."
--Katie

The story obviously already starts out ignoring the female gender, and writing from a man's point of view. One of the few references in the docks that talk about the female gender is hiddenly very negative. The first paragraph Marlow basically describes his home as the ship who is always with him, also his country who he calls the sea. He says nothing is mysterious to him except the sea and himself comparing his existence to a mistress calling "her" inscrutable. This already foreshadows Conrad's bias writing.
--Emily

Once again, males are definitely dominant in this passage, not just because they are what the story resolves around, but also because dominate women. Their dominance is seen when the accountant makes a local woman take care of his linens and make him presentable "I could not stop from asking him how he supports such linen… 'I've been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult. She had a distaste for the work'". I find this quote very disturbing, not only does this "miracle" find nothing better to do with his time that to groom himself and look European, but he forces a native woman to look after his shirts. The woman's response is clearly negative because he says that she has distaste for the work. Also, I was drawn aback by how many times he said I, along with Katie, and that the passage is very male-oriented
--CJ

I also agree with Jenn and CJ that this is a very male oriented passage. I think that the quote "'I've just been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult. She had a distaste for the work.' Thus this man had truly accomplished something." Shows how women were viewed; as objects that needed to be educated and as beings that wanted to do things such as clean the house or sit around all day. I think that this quote shows that the time period was one that viewed women as things that needed to be trained, like a dog, although they might not always enjoy the tasks, they still were forced to do them.
--Jennifer

The following sources have been used in compiling this site:

Bloom, Harold., ed. *Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness: Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990.

Kimbrough, Robert., ed. *Heart of Darkness: A Norton Critical Edition*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1988.

Murfin, Ross C., ed. *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*. New York: St. Martin's, 1989.

Thanks to the students in my fourth and fifth hour senior literature classes for making this project a success.

A special thanks to the students artists who contributed to this site: Emily Cornell, Ryan Stegink, and C.J. DeBruyn.